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Many South African Reformed Leaders Back Ecumenical Movement

(Geneva) - Dr. Robert S. Bilheimer, associate general secretary of the World Council of Churches, has reported that despite the withdrawal of two South African Dutch Reformed churches from World Council membership there are "many individual Dutch Reformed leaders who are deeply committed to the ecumenical movement and its understanding of the Church".

The World Council leader made the statement on his return here from ten days of discussions in South Africa with representatives of the WCC's six remaining member bodies in the country. The two Dutch Reformed bodies withdrew from the WCC in protest over some of the findings of a WCC-sponsored **inter-racial** consultation on the task of the churches in South Africa held last December at Cottesloe.

Dr. Bilheimer said there is a growing interest on the part of non-white churchmen in South Africa in the ecumenical movement and a recognition of the need for ties with the outside world.

He noted that the report of the Cottesloe conference has received extremely wide publicity and has been the cause of considerable controversy. "There can be no doubt", he said, "that it put forth ideas which constitute a challenge to the thinking of all Christians in South Africa, and that the Christian forces are undergoing and will continue to undergo severe testing". The basic questions under discussion, he said, are "the nature, unity and prophetic character of the Church".

Dr. Bilheimer emphasized that it is important for churches and church leaders outside South Africa to strengthen the hands of those engaged in the ecumenical struggle in the country by "encouragement and continued testimony regarding the unity of the Church and especially by expression of concern for the removal of the colour bar in the Church".

"In the present situation when South Africa is slowly being isolated from the world community", he said, "the World Council intends to keep up its policy of contact with South African member churches, and with any Christians in the Union who desire to discuss the World Council or to participate in its studies or other programmes".

A full report of the Cottesloe Consultation has just been printed in South Africa. The 100-page booklet contains the first published reports of group discussions at the controversial meeting as well as the Consultation statement, and statements by participating churches and individuals. Copies are obtainable from P.O. Box 97, Johannesburg. EPS, Geneva

Bishop Noth of East Germany Will Give Assembly Keynote Speech

(Geneva) - A Lutheran bishop from East Germany will deliver the keynote address to the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches, November 18 - December 6, in New Delhi, India.

Dr. Gottfried Noth, Dresden, of the Evangelical Lutheran Church (Landeskirche) of Saxony, will address the opening evening session, November 19, on the Assembly theme, "Jesus Christ - the Light of the World".

His audience will be more than 1,000 church leaders from the WCC's 177 member churches of the Protestant, Anglican, Orthodox, and Old Catholic communions which together have memberships estimated at more than 315,000,000.

Major speeches on the associate Assembly themes - "Witness", "Service" and "Unity" - will be given in the two days following. These speeches will set the stage for concentrated study of the theme by the 625 official delegates who will divide into three separate groups for a total of 16 hours of meetings during the next several days of the Assembly. Out of these sessions are expected to come the policy statements on social issues, international affairs, unity, evangelism and other concerns which will guide the work of the WCC for the next six years until the Fourth Assembly.

The speaker on "Witness" will be Dr. P.D. Devanandan, director of the Christian Institute for the Study of Religion and Society, Bangalore, India. The speaker on "Service" will be Professor Masao Takenaka, of Doshisha University, Kyoto, Japan, chairman of the Committee on the Witness of the Laity of the East Asia Christian Conference and vice-chairman of the World Student Christian Federation. The speaker on "Unity" will be Dr. Joseph A. Sittler, professor of the Theological Faculty of the University of Chicago, Chicago, Ill., USA.

Annotated agendas for the three sections set forth the kind of questions which delegates will be studying. An introduction notes that the agendas have been in preparation for two and a half years and that they "reflect the fundamental problems which ecumenical work has shown to be the most important ones".

The section on "Witness" will study among other things the problems of communication of the Christian Gospel in contemporary society. "What in the world and in our churches hinders communication?" is one of the questions suggested for discussion. "What distinguishes the churches' prophetic witness from merely human judgment on contemporary situations?" "What forms of church life and fellowship make some churches apparently more effective in their witness than others?"

The section on "Service" deals with the churches' relation to society, especially their responsibilities for countries of rapid social change, for world order and development and related areas. The sub-section on "World Order and Disorder" outlines three basic issues: First, it says, is the question, "Why must Christians stand for world order?" It suggests that the study of this question will involve discussion of "the constructive and destructive aspects of nationalism; the conflict between national sovereignty and the need for world order". A second question explores the duty of the Church to prevent war, and a third deals with the responsibility of the churches to see that there is justice in the use of the world's resources.

Another area of inquiry on "The Meaning of Responsible Freedom and Power" admonishes the churches to "be alert to opportunities and frustration in the awakening of peoples to national freedom and the growing demand for human rights".

The suggested agenda for the section on "Unity" deals with "the problems of the unity which we seek next", and the role of the World Council in helping bring it about. It notes there are various views about unity and genuine fears as well as hopes. It asks such questions as, "How much unity of faith is necessary for church unity?" and "How are communion and unity connected?"

In addition to the three section meetings, delegates will also meet in one of 16 committee meetings organized along lines of main programmes of WCC work. Their guide for discussions will be a 188-page "Work Book", which proposes basic programme, structure and policy of WCC work. These sessions will also report back to plenary sessions in the concluding days of the Assembly and are expected to make specific recommendations for the work of WCC divisions and departments.

EPS, Geneva

Bible Societies Rush Scriptures for Indonesia

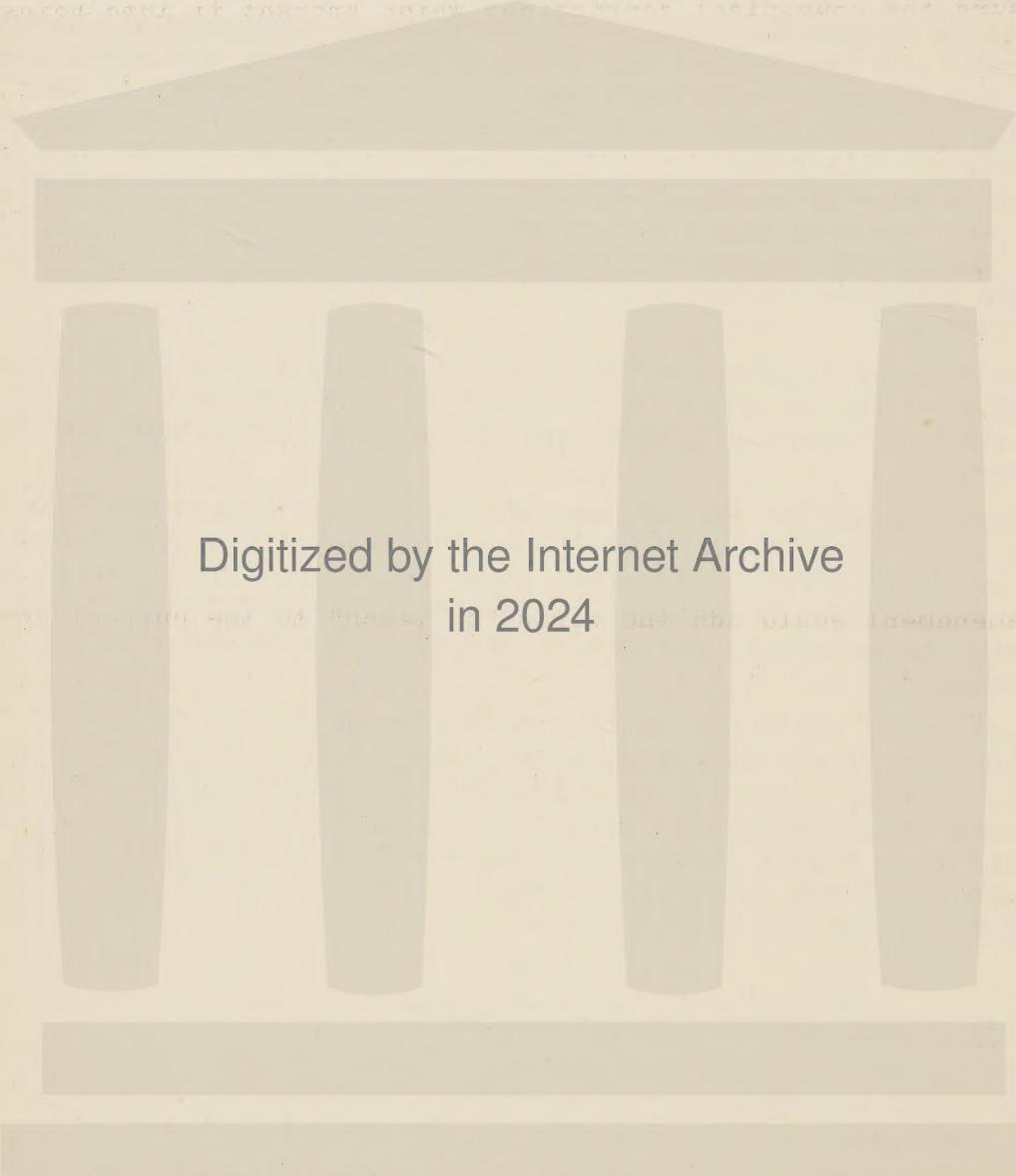
(Tokyo) - Fifty thousand New Testaments in Indonesian are being rushed through the press in Japan before an embargo against the importation of books into Indonesia becomes effective at the end of this year.

The Scriptures are being printed by the Japan Bible Society and will be the first sent by the Society to any foreign country, except Korea.

Eighty thousand Bibles in Japanese and Toba Batak are also being produced in the USA and over a quarter of a million Bibles and New Testaments in various Indonesian languages are being prepared in the Netherlands as a joint project of the Dutch, British, US, and Scottish Bible Societies. The American Bible Society has issued an urgent appeal for \$250,000 to finance its work and funds also are being collected in Australia and New Zealand.

The ban on import of books was imposed by the Indonesian government to strengthen the country's economy. It becomes effective December 25.

EPS, Geneva



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Youth Stress Ecumenical Responsibility

(Monmouth, Ill.) - Representatives to the first National Council of the United Campus Christian Fellowship warned here that the recently created interdenominational fellowship must not become a "ghetto-like" group pre-occupied with its own organizational structure.

In a report on Ecumenical Responsibility, the Council said the Fellowship "cannot allow itself to become involved in organizational preoccupations which obscure the ecumenical convictions which brought it into being".

The report called on member groups to "search constantly" for new opportunities to work with other campus Christian movements. "We know that our loyalty must be not to the structure we create, but to our Lord for whose purposes all our structures exist", it said.

Started in 1960, the United Campus Christian Fellowship combines the campus ministries of the United Church of Christ, the International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), the United Presbyterian Church in the USA, and the Evangelical United Brethren Church.

EPS, Geneva

Amendment Would Guarantee Freedom to Teach Religion in Burma

(Rangoon) - A constitutional amendment which would guarantee the right of non-Buddhists to teach their religion, is expected to be enacted in the near future by the Burmese Parliament. Buddhism was recently established as the country's official religion.

The amendment would add the words "to teach" to the current constitution which guarantees: "All persons are equally entitled to freedom of conscience and the right freely to profess and practise religion subject to public order, morality or health..."

The government has also announced it will form a Religious Affairs Committee to advise Prime Minister U Nu on problems that could lead to misunderstanding between Buddhists and non-Buddhists. The committee will be designed especially to ensure against the denial of appointments and promotions to non-Buddhists in government service. It is expected to include representatives of various religious groups.

EPS, Geneva

Swedish Prelate Will Attend Scots Assembly

(Glasgow) - The Archbishop of Sweden, Dr. Gunnar Hultgren, has accepted an invitation to attend the next General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, a gesture indicative of the extent of intercommunion which has been achieved between the Church of Sweden and the Church of Scotland.

The two churches now recognize each other's ministry and sacraments as ministries and sacraments of the Church Universal.

Arrangements also have been announced by the Church of Scotland for a conference to be held in 1963, at which representatives will be invited from the Churches of Norway, Denmark and Finland as well as from the Presbyterian Churches of England, Ireland and Wales.

EPS, Geneva

Asian Students Meet in Geneva

(Geneva) - Some 20 Asian students studying in Europe met last week at the John Knox House, the Presbyterian student centre here, for a week of discussions on "Our Calling to Service in Asia Today". The conference, the second of its kind, was held under auspices of the centre, the World Student Christian Federation, and the Youth Department of the World Council of Churches. The students came from Korea, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Ceylon, Japan, New Zealand, Australia and Singapore.

Study was organized along four lines: The Christian in Politics, The Basis of Christian Social Ethics, The Role of the Christian in His Daily Occupation, and The Worshipping Community. Discussion topics included the role of the Asian intellectual in relation to mass movements as seen in labour unions, political organizations and similar groups, and the problems of intellectual paternalism, and of leadership for new nations. Bible study was led by Dr. T. Paul Verghese, of the Syrian Orthodox Church.

EPS, Geneva

Polish Lutherans, Roman Catholics in First Formal Meeting

(Warsaw) - The first formal meeting between Roman Catholic clergymen and representatives of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Poland has stressed the importance of the ecumenical movement, and the need for co-operation in areas of common concern where theological differences are not involved.

A report of the meeting published by Tygodnik Powszechny, a Catholic newspaper printed in Cracow, reported that the leader of the Lutheran participants, Dr. Zigmunt Michelis, told the meeting that the unity of Christendom should be the "topmost aim" of churches today. He said the appeals for unity voiced by Pope John XXIII "cannot be interpreted otherwise than as the voice of God Himself".

Dr. Michelis said that one of the dividing factors between Protestant and Catholic churches is the "mariology cult" in the Catholic Church. "This may cause the dangerous situation in which it could be forgotten that the whole centre of Christian life is Christ", he said. "On the other hand, Protestants often unjustifiably ignore Mary's role and this should be remedied."

EPS, Geneva

Lutheran Book Due Soon on Second Vatican Council

(Denmark) - A study book presenting the Lutheran viewpoint on the Roman Catholic Church's coming Second Vatican (Ecumenical) Council will probably be published this fall in English and German.

Two American and two German Lutheran theologians have completed manuscripts for the volume, which is being edited by Dr. K.E. Skydsgaard of Denmark, director of the Special Commission on Inter-Confessional Research of the Lutheran World Federation.

The authors are Dr. George Lindbeck, professor at Yale Divinity School, New Haven, Connecticut; Dr. Jaroslav Pelikan, professor at the University of Chicago's Federated Theological Faculty; Dr. Peter Brunner of the University of Heidelberg, and Dr. Ernst Kinder of the University of Münster, both the latter in Germany.

The title of the volume will be "The Gospel and the Ecumenical Council" (Evangelium und Konzil).

EPS, Geneva

Religious Groups in India Split on Liquor Issue

(New Delhi) - Religious groups in India have split over the merits of a government directive, issued to all of the country's 14 states, to inaugurate speedy and effective programmes of liquor prohibition.

Hindus are divided on the issue. Orthodox groups and members of the upper castes generally look upon drinking as sinful, whereas the lower castes, particularly the untouchables, take a different attitude. Moslems, who constitute India's second major religious group, are forbidden to drink.

Christians are also split on the question. Methodists quickly endorsed the directive, whereas Roman Catholics have opposed it on the grounds that it would encourage bootleg activities and deprive the government of revenue.

Three Indian states - Madras, Gujarat and Maharashtra, already enforce prohibition; partial prohibition exists in eight other states, and the sale of liquor is permitted in the remaining three states. EPS, Geneva

WCC Observers to Attend Orthodox Meeting

(Geneva) - Three observers from the World Council of Churches will attend the meeting of Orthodox leaders to be held on the Island of Rhodes, Greece, September 24 - October 1. The invitations to the World Council were issued by the organizing committee for the meeting, which will be the first of its kind in over thirty years. (See EPS No. 28)

The WCC observers will be: the Rev. Francis House, associate general secretary; Dr. Nick Nissiotis, assistant director of the WCC's Ecumenical Institute; and the Rev. Raymond Maxwell, secretary for Orthodox churches and countries of the Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees.

EPS, Geneva

Stewardship Emphasis Called

(Geneva) - Greater emphasis on the importance of stewardship within the member churches of the World Council of Churches has been called for by an international consultation on Stewardship just concluded here. The meeting was held at the WCC's Ecumenical Institute at nearby Bossey.

Fifty-seven stewardship specialists, theologians, pastors and laymen convened for the seven-day consultation, declared that "there is a vital connection between the need for the renewal of the Church and the commitment that is called into being through Christian stewardship".

"We likewise believe", they said, "that the ability of the Church to fulfil her mission in our time is closely related to the development of dynamic stewardship in the entire Church".

The statement was made in a communication by the consultation to the World Council of Churches. The consultation was the first on the subject ever held under WCC auspices. Participants came from five continents and represented the Protestant, Anglican and Orthodox communions.

The communication asked that the WCC draw the attention of "member churches to the existence of this emphasis on stewardship and the importance of nurturing it". It also asked that the WCC through its Department on the Laity give special attention to stewardship within the WCC structure.

The consultation said that it was its conviction that "in this generation the Holy Spirit is at work in a most significant and relevant way in a movement of Christian stewardship. The dimension of the work", it noted, "is world-wide and manifests itself in a variety of ways. As we have worked and prayed and shared experiences this conviction has grown in intensity."

Consultation chairman, Dr. Hans-Ruedi Weber, associate director of the Institute, noted participants included both stewardship specialists as well as theologians and others who are critical of the stewardship movement in the churches.

In an earlier session Dr. T.K. Thompson, executive director of the Department of Stewardship and Benevolence of the National Council of Churches in the USA, emphasized the "rapid, almost like wild-fire, growth" of the stewardship idea through world Protestantism in the past five years.

He reported that 36 of the 43 dioceses of the Church of England now have full-time stewardship directors and that the British Methodist Church, the Church of Scotland and the National Christian Council of India also have appointed full-time directors.

Tracing the history of the movement in the US, Dr. Thompson pointed to two major factors in its growth. First, he said, was the emphasis on "voluntarism" - in which both membership in the church and support of the church is the direct decision of the individual. During most of the 19th century, he said, "revivalism was the basic Protestant pattern ... (and) thousands, even millions, were swept into the churches on the wave of great fervour... The same type of voluntarism was true of stewardship. People could have a church simply if they were willing to pay for it. Stewardship and evangelism were the bedrock presuppositions of American Protestantism."

The second factor, he said, was the emphasis on national and foreign missions, both of which required large amounts of money for their support. It is only in the 20th century, he added, that "the idea of the unity of all giving out of basic stewardship motivations really took hold".

"Today, it is apparent that the preaching of the Gospel, wherever and however it is done, is essentially the one mission of the Church and that the whole of the Christian church is missionary in its very nature", he declared.

"American Protestantism has discovered that stewardship means serving Christ in the earning of one's money and in the spending of one's money, no less than in the giving of money."

Another speaker, Mr. C.I. Itty, associate secretary of the WCC's Youth Department, was highly critical of the stewardship movement. Speaking on "Stewardship Seen Through Asian and African Eyes", he said that most of the programmes seem "bourgeois" to Asians and Africans. Stewardship today, he noted, is generally interpreted as giving money to either church or charity, but when Christ spoke of giving money he told his followers that it should be given to the poor. In India, he said, the Christian churches lay the stress on payment of taxes as a Christian duty to support the government's programmes for social and economic development.

"Giving alms is no longer tenable", he declared. "We are accountable not only to God, but to society. We cannot say that the only right stewardship is to give to the churches. That is one way, but only one way." He said that it was imperative for the churches in Asia to develop their own methods of stewardship and not merely follow the patterns imported from the West.

Polish Government Places New Restrictions on Religious Instruction

(Warsaw) - The conflict between Church and State in Poland in the matter of religious instruction appears to have reached a decisive stage with the publication last week of a new government order placing rigid regulations upon teaching of school-age children.

The order given August 19 and disclosed last week in an issue of the official Communist organ Trybuna Ludu prescribes the amount and kind of instruction students can have outside of class-room time. The government had previously passed a bill banning all religious instruction in state schools.

The new order limits the amount of instruction to two hours a week, makes catechism teachers employees of the state and places classes and teachers under government supervision. Key points include:

- Teaching permits will be denied to "those priests who have abused the generally accepted principles of behaviour toward young people" such as "using religious lessons for reactionary political purposes".
- Members of religious orders are barred from teaching catechism.
- Catechism classes must be registered with local school boards which will "exercise supervision over them".
- The places of teaching "must be fitted out with appropriate requirements of hygiene and must not be overcrowded".

Trybuna Luda denied that the order violated the principle of freedom of conscience - a principle guaranteed by the Polish Constitution.

However, a report in the New York Times said "the order has aroused many clergymen who had been inclined to live with Poland's 'Communist regimen' as best they could".

The Times also reported the Roman Catholic episcopate has just concluded an exhaustive discussion of the situation in a conference at Czestochowa, and is expected to make a public statement shortly.

EPS, Geneva

Church Leaders, East German Official Hold Talks

(Berlin) - Hans Seigewasser, East German Secretary of State for Church Affairs, has met with officials of the Evangelical Church in Thuringia, East Germany, to discuss "questions regarding the conclusion of a peace treaty" for Germany and the "consequences for church policy" of the present crisis.

Mr. Seigewasser held a similar meeting earlier with church leaders in Mecklenburg and is expected to meet in the near future with church leaders in other parts of East Germany.

EPS, Geneva

Havana Denounces Clergy As "Counterrevolutionary"

(Havana) - The Cuban government today accused Roman Catholic priests of plotting against Prime Minister Fidel Castro's government. The charge came in an Interior Ministry communiqué denouncing the clergy as counter-revolutionary".

The communiqué said "a clerical Falangist group" had received in the last few weeks a shipment of explosives and arms to promote uprisings in Pinar del Rio, Las Villas and Oriente Provinces, as well as "sabotage and terrorism campaigns" all over Cuba.

The communiqué denounced Monsignor Eduardo Boza Mosvidal, Bishop of Havana's Church of Charity, for "counterrevolutionary activities", and the Rev. Francisco Viera as "one of the main contacts" between a subversive organization here and the United States Central Intelligence Agency.

The communiqué was issued in the wake of Sunday's anti-Communist demonstration in front of the Church of Charity where one person was killed and several wounded. Police reportedly fired into the crowd. EPS, Geneva

In Brief

A new Christian radio station has begun operation in Kwanju, Korea. Station HLCL is the newest station in a Korean network, the first Christian radio network in the world. It will broadcast seven hours daily in Korean and in English. The new station was made possible by a grant given by the Presbyterian US Board of World Missions, through RAVEMCCO, the National Council of Churches (US) radio, visual education and mass communications committee.

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Production of Bibles and Scripture portions in Germany has increased from 170,250 in 1945 to 1,252,590 in 1960, the Association of Evangelical Bible Societies in Germany has announced. There are 35 Bible societies in Germany, 9 of them in East Germany.

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"Christian non-violence" as a means of achieving brotherhood is urged in a resolution adopted by delegates to the recent ninth annual Assembly of the Baptist Student Movement (USA). The resolution described Christian non-violence as "a technique and/or way of life to establish within our country the new human community of the dignity of persons, and the justice of laws for all men".

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An art exhibit on the theme "Man" is on tour in various parts of Scotland under auspices of the Church of Scotland. The exhibit features work by twelve young artists - many of which were painted especially for the exhibit - and is intended "to reveal man's contemporary situation and the choices before him". The exhibit was on view at the Edinburgh International Festival.

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The first international Inter-Church Aid Directory has just been published by the World Council of Churches. The 50-page booklet lists inter-church aid and refugee service personnel in Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Europe, and North and South America. Previous directories gave listings only for Europe. An introduction notes that it is "intended to provide the traveller who wishes to do more than 'skim the surface', with a guide to the wide range of ways in which churches are helping each other in times of need across national and confessional boundaries". Copies may be purchased through the Publications Office, World Council of Churches, 17 route de Malagnou, Geneva, Switzerland.

* * *

Ground will be broken next month for the new \$112,000 John Smyth Memorial Baptist Church in Amsterdam. The project for the building of the new edifice was begun in 1958, in connection with the 350th anniversary of the baptism of John Smyth and the establishment in Amsterdam of the church from which Baptists trace their modern history. Contributions for the new church have come from Baptists in Europe, Lebanon, Malaya, Burma, Hong Kong, Taiwan, New Zealand and North and South America.

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The Holy Synod of the Rumanian Orthodox Church has closed its annual meeting in Bucharest with a pledge to make intensified efforts on behalf of world peace. The Synod said that bishops, priests and laymen would be urged to join in demands for banning of nuclear weapons and complete disarmament.

* * *

Forty volunteers - men and women, students, and even children - are spending their free time and holidays preparing an international house for overseas students at Hull, England. The scheme, sponsored by the city's Anglican churches, has been launched by the Hull Council of Churches, which has appealed for funds. So far more than £20,000 has been raised or promised. Government grants amount to £9,000. The sponsors have bought a former nursing home, which will eventually accommodate 32 overseas students.

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Dr. Ralph Waldo Lloyd, president of the World Presbyterian Alliance, is making a year-long around-the-world "Presidential Visitation" to leaders of Presbyterian and Reformed churches in Europe, Africa, Asia, and Australasia. Dr. and Mrs. Lloyd started the trip in August at the annual meeting of the Alliance Executive Committee in the Netherlands. They will complete it in Japan in the early summer of 1962. The "Visitation" is the first such programme in the Alliance's 86-year history. The trip is being financed by Foundation funds independent of the Alliance. Dr. Lloyd is taking a leave of absence from Maryville College (USA) of which he has been president for the past 31 years.

EPS, Geneva